

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

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Governor Bullock & Agriculture Development Council Award \$208,000 in Growth Through Agriculture Awards

Helena, Mont. - Governor Steve Bullock, the Montana Department of Agriculture, and the Agriculture Development Council today announced \$208,700 in grant and loan awards for value-added agricultural related projects through the Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) program. Among the recipients are a farming co-op, brewery, and university. The six projects were selected by the Agriculture Development Council.

"Agriculture is not only at the heart of Montana's communities, it is part of the backbone of our state's economy," Bullock said of the awards. "These awards will allow these businesses to expand and enhance their operations, increasing demand for Montana agricultural products, creating jobs and introducing these products to new markets."

A key objective of Bullock's Main Street Montana Project is promoting agriculture products by adding value and increasing the accessibility to local, national and international markets. These grants will assist these recipients in accomplishing this goal.

"I am continually impressed with level of applications we receive from businesses throughout Montana. This cycle we were able to assist some projects that the council believes will be successful and grow Montana's agriculture, food industries, and ultimately jobs" said Agriculture Development Council Chair Amy Kellogg, co-owner of Country Pasta in Polson, Mont.

Due to the non-traditional nature of many food and agriculture businesses, they struggle to access capital through banks or other lending institutions. The Growth Through Agriculture program was created by the legislature to assist food and agriculture businesses over the financing hump with either a grant or loan designed to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry through development of new agricultural products and processes.

The next Growth Through Agriculture application deadline is September 15, 2015. Interested food and agriculture businesses are encouraged to contact their local economic development organizations for assistance or visit the program website at <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Development/GrantsLoans/GTA/>.

Winter 2015 GTA Funding Recipients:

Western Montana Growers Cooperative – Arlee

A loan and a grant totaling \$73,700 to assist with the development and expansion of a distribution and warehouse facility in Missoula that will support over 40 farms in Western Montana and provide distribution to a wide-range of Montana produced foods and products. <http://wmgcoop.com/>

Polebridge Mercantile & Bakery – Whitefish

A grant for \$20,000 to assist with the expansion of bakery operations to a new location in Whitefish, creating a sustainable year-round bakery business that uses Montana grown ingredients. <http://polebridgemerc.com/whitefish-location/>

University of Montana – Missoula

A grant for \$10,000 to assist with the expansion of the university's dining garden and farm to college program to increase high value food production, educate future farmers, and increase consumer demand for Montana's agricultural products. <http://www.umt.edu/dining/>

Duckworth, Inc. – Bozeman

A loan for \$30,000 to assist with the development of a Montana raised wool sock product line. Duckworth, Inc. sources merino wool from Montana woolgrowers. <http://www.duckworthco.com/>

Philipsburg Brewing Co. – Philipsburg

A loan and grant totaling \$50,000 to expand the Philipsburg brewery for the development of an aluminum bottling line. www.philipsburgbrewingcompany.com/

Glacier Sun Winery – Kalispell

A loan and a grant totaling \$25,000 to assist with the expansion of the winery utilizing Montana grown cherries, huckleberries, apples, and grapes. <http://www.applebarrelmt.com/glacier-sun-winery>

The Montana Department of Agriculture's mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the Montana Department of Agriculture, visit agr.mt.gov.

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